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Introduction

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Tantrism is often associated purely with soteriology and esoteric practices to gain supernatural power. But Tantrism was also concerned with life cycle rituals, royal consecrations, the installation of images of deities in temples and their worship, and with temple architecture. The papers collected here represent a broad spectrum of the study of tantric traditions and deal with major theological and practical concerns in the Śaiva Siddhānta, non-Saiddhāntika traditions, the Pāñcarātra, Vīraśaivism and the Nātha tradition, focussing on ideas of the image, the temple, and the body.

Three papers deal with images; images of deities but also portraits of human beings. On one hand, Silvia Schwarz-Linder views divine images through the lens of Pāñcarātra theology, on the other hand, Marie-Luce Barazer-Billoret and Vincent Lefèvre examine images in the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition in the context of installation ceremonies and in the context of portraiture. Based mainly upon the Pāñcarātra *Pādma Saṃhitā* (a pre-thirteenth century), Silvia Schwarz-Linder's study deals with the distinctive use of *rūpa* and *mūrti* for categorising the various forms taken by the divine at different levels of the theophanic and cosmogonic process of creation (*sṛṣṭi*). It shows that *rūpa* pertains to metaphysics, concerning the being of God rather than his becoming. Thus the term *rūpa* is used to designate the supreme (*para*) form of the divine, as well as *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*; these two *tattvas* being deemed as 'forms' of *paramātman* in the cosmogonic emanation process. Moreover, the same term *rūpa* is applied to the image of God as visualised in meditation, which may be *sthūla/sakala, sūkṣma/sakalaniṣkala* or *para/niṣkala*. By contrast, a *mūrti* may be defined as 'a concretisation of the divine essence in a particular figure'. In the creation process, the term is applied to the *vyūha* level and the various *mūrtis* are said to be born in sequence one from the other but without any hierarchical order resulting from such a process, for all partake of the same supreme substance of the *para* form of God. But these *mūrtis*, born from the process of *sṛṣṭi*, are connected with the material icons (*arcā*) used in temple worship and which, at the time of installation (*pratiṣṭhā*), are entered by a particular aspect of God. *Mūrtis* are also linked with *mantras*: if there is a *mūrtimantra* related to each *mūrti*, it may be said that mantras are phonic *mūrtis* of the God. To summarise, we can say that *rūpa* and *mūrti* refer to the being of God and his becoming

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respectively. Each are dealt with in different parts of *Pādmasaṃhitā*. *Rūpa* is found in *jñānapāda* and *yogapāda*, while *mūrti* is found, on the one hand, in the *jñānapāda* where it is shown how the *sṛṣṭi* process makes of God a plurality of divine figures (*mūrti*), and, on the other, in the *kriyāpāda* and *caryāpāda* where the *mūrtis* are present in the temple.

Marie-Luce Barazer-Billoret's paper is centred on the *Dīptāgama*, a Śaiva Siddhānta text whose subtitle *pratiṣṭhātantra* underlines that 'installation' of divine images is one of its main topics. This treatise deals mainly with Śiva's representations (*liṅgas* and images) although a few chapters deal with the installation of some of Śiva's attendants, showing that the ritual procedure is the same as for Śiva. The procedure comprises three main stages: preparation, transmutation of the material representation into the god, and lastly rituals in which the god thus installed participates. Preparation comprises two material interventions on the image, namely the placing of jewels and opening the eyes; and two 'sojourns' (*adhivāsa*); for the first the image is plunged in water for a final purification before becoming god, while the second sojourn is a more complex ceremony organised in a pavilion where Śiva stays as a mantra in a vase, as the fire (*śivāgni*) in a fire pit, and as the statue which he is to become the next day. The installation proper comprises the imposition on the image of god's mantra and of his mantric constituents (*kalā*, limbs, etc.). These rites constitute a complete worship session, along with a festival and if necessary the marriage of the god to his Śakti. From a general perspective, the *Dīptāgama* highlights the importance of divine images in a Śiva temple, whichever they are (the *liṅga* in sanctum, movable bronze statues, and images on the wall): all receive a daily cult and distinction between them depends upon use and not upon hierarchy. Lastly the *Dīptāgama* gives pre-eminence to bronze statues, which reflects the enrichment of Tamil country during the Cola period, and to festivals, which have a large place in the text.

In his paper on 'portraits', Vincent Lefèvre tries to see what the definition of a portrait is in the Indian tradition, using mainly normative texts. From a semantic perspective, there does not seem to be a specific term to designate a portrait; all the terms used for them are also used for divine images, which suggests that both human portraits and divine images are of the same nature. When looking to normative literature, the most ancient text known, Nagnajit's *Citralakṣaṇa*, along with the somewhat later *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, places the origin of images in the making of portraits. As for the divine images, Śaiva or Vaiṣṇava sources show that they are 'faithful likenesses' of deities, which means that they are quite like human portraits. This being the case, there are good examples (in India as well as Southeast Asia) of divine images which at the same time are human portraits and which may be seen as sculpted counterparts of *śleṣas* in *kāvya*. Prescriptions for making images of human beings are found in religious treatises (dealing with devotees or *bhaktas*) and more mundane works also deal with the human figure such as Nagnajit's *Citralakṣaṇa* (a description of the *cakravartin*), the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (a full chapter about anthropometry and human physiognomy), and

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the *Viṣṇudharmottara* (that contains accounts of human proportions). Finally, it is interesting to see that in the *Dīptāgama* (dealt with in M.-L. Barazer-Billoret's paper) a full chapter describes the installation ceremony (*pratiṣṭhā, sthāpana*) of a portrait of the king (the same ritual being usable for a devotee's image as well). To summarise, it may be said that in India images of both human and divine beings may be deemed as 'portraits' even if in both cases it appears that such portraits are widely idealised.

These three papers each in their own way centre on the origin of Indian divine images. Sylvia Schwarz Linder shows that divine images used for worship are understood as a shift from the purely metaphysical *para* form, through meditation that highlights the three-fold nature of god, to his three-fold depiction. Thus those images mark the end of an evolutionary process whose origin is to found in the Absolute, the *Brahman* or primeval light. Marie-Luce Barazer-Billoret deals with the origin of the divine nature of image: the ritual process is basically the same, whatever is the nature of the god and his representation (both being, by the way, three-fold as in the pāñcarātric view). As a matter of fact Śiva appears here under the guise of many forms: before the transfer of the *mantras* into the image, he is the sacrificial fire, the vase that contains his mantra, and already the object into which he is to be installed. Afterwards, he is equally in all the representations that have been installed. Vincent Lefèvre deals with the origin of the images, through the model that they are copying; iconometry of divine images issues from anthropometry, while the oldest known theorized representations are the human ones dealt with in Nagnajit's *Citralakṣaṇa*. Apparently both categories of image diverge regarding portraits, the main reference being normative description in one case and individual features in the other; however they converge when the divine image combines its normative features with those of a human, who thus partakes in the divine nature.

As the only paper in the edition discussing architectural topics, Henri Schildt's study deals with a technique used to ascertain the auspiciousness of the dimensions of a building, which may be religious or secular. The *āyādi* system (*alias ṣaḍvarga* system) is often alluded to in architectural or liturgical treatises when dealing with dimensions to be given to buildings whatever they are (temple, house, pavilion . . .) as well as to images. However it is in treatises on architecture of Kerala origin, such as the *vāstuśāstras* studied by H. Schildt, that the matter is more clearly presented. The system, which gives an important place to *nakṣatras*, combines astrological and numerological topics; it calls for various calculations resulting in a remainder, the value of which becomes the basis for establishing the auspiciousness of a dimension. Without fully entering into the details of the results obtained by H. Schildt, we may underline some of them. In architecture, the system is applied to the main dimensions of all kinds of buildings from temple to *catuśśāla* through temple theatre (*kūttambalam*) and various types of pavilions and ancillary edifices. But it also plays a part in far more minute details, such as the out-centring of doors or their dimensions. The more important of the *āyādi*

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formulae, at least in Kerala, is the *yoni* ('origin') which is deemed to be 'the life and breath of an edifice' and to which all others are subordinate; in spite of that, the name given to the system remains there as elsewhere as the one which locates the 'income' (*āya*) formula as the initial one. The calculations called for by the system require some comment. The 'mathematical' aspect of the process is not to be overestimated, as is shown when it implies the multiplying by three of the diameter of a circle to obtain its circumference (see too the notes about *iṣṭadīrgha* defined as being roughly the third of the intended perimeter); however, such an approximation leads to the use of a particular unit, intermediary between 'digit' (*aṅgula*) and 'cubit' (*hasta*), that is to say the *pada* which makes a third of a cubit or 8 digits. From a practical point of view, various methods are given to select the dimension whose auspiciousness is to be checked. Significantly for Kerala where wooden carpentry is a common feature of buildings, that dimension is normally to be taken along the wall-plate (*uttara*), but as elsewhere it may also be taken along the outside, median or inner axis of the building peripheral wall. Lastly, as emphasised by Henri Schildt, one may wonder how the measurements were actually made and the subsequent calculations: what was the part of the astrologer and what that of the architect?

Moving from external measurement in architecture to representation of the inner or subtle body, Eva-Maria Glasbrenner presents the *cakra* system and its accompanying ritual in the Vīraśaiva tradition. Basing her study on Māyideva's *Śivānubhavasūtra*, Glasbrenner shows how the Vīraśaivas developed a complex system of worship and soteriology. The goal of Vīraśaiva practice was to overcome duality and experience unity with Śiva (*śivaikya*). This means that the devotee realises himself to be a part (*aṅga*) of Śiva, who is the *liṅga*, and both become united (*liṅgāṅgaikya*) in inner experience (*anubhāva*). Both experiencer or creator and experienced or created are realised as two aspects of a single substance or energy. The founder of Vīraśaivism, Basava, presents the path to this experience as a graded hierarchy of six levels or stages of development (*sthala*) which are also the structure of the cosmos. This complex path is expounded in the main text that Glasbrenner deals with, the fifteenth century *Śivānubhava* by Māyideva, where the six stages are described. Although the *Śivānubhavasūtra* presents a complex system, it would seem that Māyideva is simplifying an even more complex system that he has inherited.

The totality of the cosmos comprising these levels is generated out of the interaction between two dimensions of the united absolute, what is actual (*śiva*) and what is potential (*śūnyatā*). All that is actual is further divided into Śiva, unmoving cosmic matter, and Śakti, the kinetic energy that generates primeval cosmic matter through vibration (*spandana*). Śiva and Śakti further generate themselves into the paired stages of *liṅga* and *aṅga*, and *śakti* and *bhakti*. This latter pair in turn is subdivided into three further pairs or sub-*sthalas* which are again further differentiated. Glasbrenner opens out this complex universe for us and shows how the

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cosmic structure is related to the body, particularly the subtle body, and the system of *cakras*.

The Vīraśaiva system would seem to be unique in its structure, although, as Glasbrenner observes, it owes much to earlier traditions, particularly the non-Saiddhāntika traditions from Kashmir. To date, most of the scholarship on the tradition has been silent with regard to its tantric origins and even the tradition itself seems reticent about acknowledging this, but the terminology used and the general hierarchical system that is located within the body clearly draw from the tantric milieu. One of Glasbrenner's informants did admit to there being a Vīraśaiva Tantra but owing to its secrecy was not forthcoming about it. What is clear is that the practice or *sādhana* follows a process of gradual purification of the yogi and that *bhakti* does not only mean devotional surrender but also refers to the orientation of the practitioner towards the goal of *śivaikya* and the meditation practice of the *cakras*. As with other tantric systems, the journey through the hierarchal cosmos back to the unity of its source is also a symbolic/experiential journey through the body.

With Olga Serbaeva's paper, 'Yoga from the Yoginīs' point of view', we move into a different, more transgressive tantric world. Focussing on the term *yoginī*, Serbaeva shows that it cannot be easily related to *yoga*. Through a close reading of Śaiva published and manuscript sources, both purānic and tantric, Serbaeva describes the uses of the term and we can see that it is used more in the context of supernatural beings than female practitioners of yoga. In the *Yoga-sūtras yoginīs* are absent, although they appear in later yoga texts such as the *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*, where the terms *yoga, yogin* and *yoginī* appear together. In some textual locations the term *yoginī* refers to actual women who participated in sexual practices whose origins lay in the Kāpālika cremation ground cults. In order to discover the origins of these later yogic references we need to go back to the earlier Śaiva sources, where the term *yoginī* has four referents: (i) it refers to real women who might be engaged in tantric practices, (ii) it refers to non-human, generally harmful supernatural beings, (iii) it refers to beings located within a *maṇḍala* or even within the body, and (iv) it is a term for the highest state of consciousness in the non-Saiddhāntika traditions of the Trika and Kālikula.

Following Sanderson's mapping of these traditions, Serbaeva describes how we only find yoginīs in the Bhairavaśāstra, which is part of the Mantramārga. In this group of texts we have a distinction between the 'seat of mantras' (*mantrapīṭha*) and 'seat of vidyās' (*vidyāpīṭha*). The *Svacchandabhairavatantra* is a major text in the first category in which there are some references to *yoginī*, but the term comes into greater use in the second category. Here within the Vidyāpīṭha three traditions can be identified, namely the cult of Tumburu-bhairava, which Serbaeva does not deal with, the Yāmalas, and the Śakti tantras. In these texts the *yoginīs* are linked to other beings, the *śākinīs* and *ḍākinīs*, and also associated with yoga, which means here mantra repetition. The earliest text of the Yāmala genre, the *Brahmayāmala* that Sanderson has edited, classifies *yoginīs* as deities to whom

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worship is made as well as goddesses in human form who need to be found and addressed in a special symbolic language. Śakti tantras such as the *Tantrasadbhāva* and *Siddhayogeśvarīmatga* mention *yoginīs* in the context of mastery over mantras and transgressive, tantric worship involving sexual practices and the offering and consumption of impure substances, including human flesh. It is an interesting question concerning the extent to which such transgressive practices reflected a social reality, a practice that groups actually performed, and the degree to which they should be taken simply as literary tropes. Again, the link to classical yoga is very thin. Yoginīs, then, in this textual material are sources of doctrine, beings who grant initiation, beings with whom male practitioners identify in ritual, and personifications of levels of the cosmos. The term *yoginī* is thus multi-layered, referring to a human practitioner, an initiating goddess, a state of consciousness, and a level or region of the cosmos. All of these meanings can, of course, coalesce in a single person.

Developing the theme of the body, the final paper by Lubomir Ondracka considers the categories 'divine body' (*divya-deha*) and 'perfected body' (*siddha-deha*) in Nāth-Siddha texts. Rather than presenting a complete account, the paper offers the preliminary findings of his research about the meaning of these terms. Scholars have generally taken these terms to refer to a non-material body in which perfection or immortality is achieved. Ondracka questions this through an examination of the textual sources in Sanskrit after a clarification of the terms in previous scholars' work. Ondracka provides us with a survey of work including that of Shashbhusan Dasgupta, Kalyani Mallik, and David White who deal with the idea of the perfected body. After a sympathetic but critical survey, Ondracka then goes on to examine the textual sources, showing how the term 'perfected body' (*siddhadeha*) is not actually used in Nātha-Siddha texts. Indeed, the term is very rare in Sanskrit literature and is probably only used as a technical term in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava texts, where *siddhadeha* or *siddharūpa* refers to the highest goal of practice, namely the body in which the devotee experiences Vrajaloka. Other terms such as 'diamond body' (*vajradeha*) and 'yoga body' (*yogadeha*) are equally rare in the texts.

The only term that is found more often in the literature is *divya-deha*, which is achieved through *kuṇḍalinī yoga* and is a body free from disease and old age, full of energy, with a divine fragrance. There is, however, no reference to the transformation of a perfected physical body into a spiritual one. Indeed, the texts do not contain any coherent account of different kinds of body, but Ondracka's preliminary research seems to show that Nātha-Siddha texts were concerned with attaining a physical body which was ageless and transcended causal laws through the practice of the *khecarīmudrā*, the rolling of the tongue back into the nasal cavity to drink the nectar of immortality thought to be dripping down through the *rājadanta*.

Reading these essays we have a sense of the great breadth of the tantric traditions. Their concerns are not restricted to privatised, individual practice such as

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the repetition of mantras (although that is important), but incorporate temple architecture, temple ritual, theological reflection, and cosmography. Indeed, we see here how the tantric traditions span a very long period from possibly as early as the fifth century through to the sixteenth century and beyond. Within this time frame we have esoteric traditions developing and being absorbed into mainstream, orthodox traditions and orthodox concerns coming to be reflected in tantric texts. It seems clear that we cannot offer an account of the history of religions in South Asia in the absence of these important religions.

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